

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A visual monitoring system for monitoring an interior area of a mobile platform and providing a video signal to a remotely
5 located monitoring station, the system comprising:
at least one camera positioned within a predetermined area of said mobile platform; and
an electronics subsystem adapted to be disposed within the mobile platform, and in communication with said camera, for
10 receiving an output video signal from said camera;
said electronics subsystem including:
a processor for converting said output video signal to a streaming video signal suitable for transmission in accordance with a wide area network
15 protocol; and
a modem for converting said streaming video signal into a data stream output for transmission over an existing in-flight telephone system on said aircraft to said monitoring station.
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2. The system of claim 1, wherein said electronics subsystem is contained within a single enclosure.
3. The system of claim 1, wherein said processor
25 comprises:
a central processing unit; and
a random access memory in communication with said central processing unit.
- 30 4. The system of claim 1, further comprising:

a read only memory in communication with said central processing unit for storing a driver used by said central processing unit.

5 5. The system of claim 1, further comprising a universal serial bus (USB) port for interfacing said output of said camera with said processor.

10 6. The system of claim 1, wherein said camera comprises a charge coupled display (CCD) camera.

7. The system of claim 1, wherein said streaming video signal comprises an Internet protocol video signal.

8. A visual monitoring system for monitoring an interior area of a mobile platform and providing a video signal representative of said interior area to a remotely located monitoring station, the system comprising:

5 at least one camera positioned within a predetermined area of said mobile platform; and

 a compact electronics component carried in the mobile platform and located remotely from said camera, and in communication with said camera, for receiving an output video signal
10 from said camera;

 said compact electronics component including:

 an enclosure;

 a processor disposed within said enclosure for converting said output video signal to a streaming video signal
15 suitable for transmission in accordance with a wide area network protocol; and

 a modem disposed within said enclosure for converting said streaming video signal into a data stream output for transmission over an existing in-flight telephone system on said
20 mobile platform to said base station.

9. The system of claim 8, wherein said streaming video signal comprises an Internet protocol video signal.

25 10. The system of claim 8, further comprising a random access memory and communicating with said processor.

 11. The system of claim 8, further comprising a read only memory (ROM) communicating with said processor.

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12. The system of claim 8, further comprising a plurality of cameras disposed at a plurality of locations within said mobile platform and communicating with said processor.

- 5 13. The system of claim 8, further comprising a Universal Serial Bus (USB) port for interfacing said camera with said processor.

14. The system of claim 8, wherein said camera comprises a charge coupled device (CCD) camera.

15. A visual monitoring system for monitoring an interior area of an aircraft and providing a video signal representative of said interior area to a ground station via an existing in-flight telephone system on the aircraft, the system comprising:

5 at least one camera positioned within a predetermined area of said aircraft for generating an output video signal representing a designated area which said camera is focused on; and

 a compact electronics component carried in the aircraft and located remotely from said camera, and in communication with
10 said camera, for receiving said output video signal from said camera;

 said compact electronics component including:

 an enclosure;

 an interface port associated with
 said enclosure for interfacing with said camera to
15 receive said output video signal;

 a central processing unit disposed
 within said enclosure and in communication with said
 interface port for converting said output video signal to
 a streaming video signal suitable for transmission in
20 accordance with a wide area network protocol; and

 a modem disposed within said
 enclosure in communication with said central
 processing unit for converting said streaming video
 signal into a data stream output for transmission over
25 said existing in-flight telephone system on said aircraft
 to said ground station.

16. The system of claim 15, wherein said interface port
comprises a Universal Serial Bus (USB) port.

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17. The system of claim 15, wherein said streaming video
signal comprises an Internet protocol streaming video signal.

18. The system of claim 15, wherein said camera comprises a charge coupled device (CCD) camera.

- 5 19. The system of claim 15, further comprising a plurality of cameras disposed in predetermined locations within said aircraft and simultaneously interfaced with said interface port for providing video pictures of said predetermined locations within said aircraft.

20. A method for visually monitoring a predetermined location within a mobile platform and providing a substantially real time video signal representative of said predetermined location to a base station via an existing in-flight telephone system of said mobile platform, said method comprising:

using a camera to monitor a predetermined location within said mobile platform and to generate an output video signal in accordance therewith;

using an electronics subassembly to receive said output video signal and to convert said output video signal into a streaming video signal in accordance with a wide area network protocol; and

using said electronics subassembly to convert said streaming video signal into a format suitable for transmission over said existing in-flight telephone system to said base station.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein using said electronics subassembly to convert said streaming video signal comprises using a modem.

22. The method of claim 20, wherein using said camera comprises using a charge coupled device (CCD) camera.

23. The method of claim 20, wherein using said electronics subassembly to receive said output video signal comprises using a universal serial bus (USB) interface to receive said output video signal and to convert said output video signal into said streaming video signal.